

THE SOURDOUGH FORMULA

Recipe 1 · Classic Country Boule

The loaf that started my Friday list. If you only ever sell one bread, sell this one.

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Why people buy it: it's the crackly, golden, «real bakery» loaf they can't find at the grocery store, and it's still warm on Saturday.

- **Tier & price:** Everyday · Classic · **$11**
- **Makes:** 1 round loaf, about 900 g (2 lb) of dough, about 1.6 lb baked
- **Difficulty:** Easy
- **Timeline:** Feed Dolly Friday 8 am → mix 4 pm → shape around 9–10 pm → fridge overnight → bake Saturday 7 am → bag by 10 am

Ingredients

Ingredient	Grams	Cups (approx.)
Bread flour	450 g	3⅔ cups
Whole wheat flour	50 g	⅓ cup + 1 tbsp
Water, 80 °F (27 °C)	350 g	1½ cups
Active starter (Dolly, at her peak)	100 g	½ cup
Fine sea salt	10 g	1¾ tsp
Rice flour, for the banneton	a spoonful	1 tbsp

What changes vs. the Master Loaf

Nothing. This is the Master Loaf, exactly, and it's your bestseller. I'm writing it out in full here so you have a clean page to tape inside a cabinet door.

Steps

1. **The morning feed:** feed Dolly at 8 am. She should be doubled, domed and smelling like yogurt by 4 pm.
2. **Mix and autolyse.** Weigh the 350 g water and set 20 g aside in a cup. Add both flours and mix with your hand until no dry flour is left. Cover and rest 30 minutes.
3. **Add the starter, then the salt.** Dimple the 100 g starter into the dough and squeeze until it disappears, about 2 minutes. Sprinkle the salt, drizzle the reserved 20 g water, and squeeze for 2–3 minutes until it feels smooth again.

4. **Stretch & folds:** 4 sets, 30 minutes apart. Wet hand, grab one side of the dough, stretch it up and fold it over. Turn the bowl a quarter and repeat 4 times. Cover between sets.
5. **Bulk** at 75 °F (24 °C) until the dough has grown 50–75 %, has a domed top, a few bubbles on the sides and jiggles when you shake the bowl. Usually 4–6 hours from mixing.
6. **Pre-shape** into a loose round on an unfloured counter. Rest 20 minutes uncovered.
7. **Final shape.** Flour the top lightly, flip it, fold the bottom up, the sides in, the top down, then roll it toward you and drag it across the counter to tighten the skin. Place seam up in a banneton dusted with rice flour.
8. **Cold proof.** Cover with a shower cap or a bag and refrigerate 10–16 hours.
9. **Bake.** Preheat the Dutch oven at 500 °F (260 °C) for 45 minutes. Flip the loaf onto parchment, score, and lower it in. Lid on 20 minutes at 475 °F (245 °C), lid off 20–25 minutes at 450 °F (230 °C), until deep golden and 205–210 °F (96–99 °C) inside.
10. **Cool** on a rack at least 2 hours before cutting or bagging.

Shaping, scoring & baking specifics

- **Banneton:** 9 in (23 cm) round, or a mixing bowl lined with a floured tea towel.
- **Score:** one confident curved slash about ½ in (1 cm) deep, held at a 30° angle, for that bakery «ear». Or a simple square (4 cuts) if you want an even rise. Your score is your signature: pick one and keep it.
- **Dutch oven:** 5–6 quart, round. Bake straight from the fridge. Cold dough scores cleaner.

Cost & Price

Ingredient	Amount	Cost
Bread flour	450 g	$0.55
Whole wheat flour	50 g	$0.08
Starter (with feed)	100 g	$0.25
Salt	10 g	$0.01
Rice flour (dusting)	1 tbsp	$0.05
Oven share	½ bake	$0.46
Total ingredients		**$1.40**
Packaging (bag, label, twine)	1 set	$0.35
Sell at		**$11.00**
You keep		**$9.25**

How to sell it

Everyone buys this one: families, couples, the neighbor who «doesn't eat bread». It's the loaf for your standing weekly orders, so offer it first in every subscription message.

Menu line to copy: *Classic Country Sourdough. Crackly crust, soft open crumb, three ingredients and 24 hours of patience. Baked this morning. $11*

> ***Sarah's tip: Put the internal temperature on your own checklist, not just the color. My loaves only started coming out the same every Saturday when I stopped guessing and used a $12 thermometer.***

If it goes wrong

- **Flat, spreading loaf:** bulk went too long, or the shaping was loose. Next time stop bulk at +50 % and drag the loaf a few more times to tighten the skin.
- **Dense with a few big holes on top:** under-fermented. Let bulk go longer, and check that Dolly was at her peak at mix time.

- **Gummy inside:** it was cut too early or pulled too soon. Bake to 205 °F (96 °C) and wait the full 2 hours.